

CO Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript - Wednesday, April 5, 2017

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Date: Wed, 05 Apr 2017 12:08:42 -0400
Attachments: 20170405 - Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript.doc (117.76 kB)

Please see attached Cabinet Office's Transcript of Provincial Question Period for Wednesday, April 5, 2017.

MIT did not receive any questions of interest.

MCI had a question of interest.

MPP Shafiq Qaadri asked Min. Marie-France Lalonde about government initiatives that support the Francophonie. Min. Lalonde replied that she and Min. Laura Albanese had participated in the Moncton summit on Francophone immigration and that both of them are working hard to achieve a 5% Francophone immigration rate for Ontario.

MSA did not receive any questions of interest.

Hydro executive salaries was a prominent topic today.

The official Hansard will be available later today by clicking on the link below.

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/house-proceedings/house_proceedings_home.do?locale=en

From: Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB)
Sent: April 5, 2017 11:57 AM
To: @CAB-ProvLegQP
Subject: Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript - Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Transcript of Provincial Question Period
41st Parliament, 2nd Session
Wednesday, April 5, 2017

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

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MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Murray) Re: Cap-and-Trade

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I hope everyone has had a chance to see the Ontario chamber of commerce letter today. They had a lot to say about cap and trade. In fact they had many of the same concerns as Ontario's P.C. -- Costs to lead to Ontario losing out on jobs and invest many. That's from the Ontario chamber of commerce. The chamber noted the Liberals must consider how we could prevent exporting jobs and investment while importing pollution. But that's just what their scheme does. Will this government stop exporting jobs and importing pollution under their dangerous cap and trade scheme?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm sure that the leader of the opposition knows that the federal government has mandated that every province and territory have some form of carbon pricing in place by 2018, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure he's aware of that. I'm sure he's aware that the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is that, as humanity, we are facing the greatest challenge in our history, Mr. Speaker, understanding that climate change is real. So we're taking the lead in Ontario to move forward with the plan to cap the pollution that businesses can release in order to reduce that pollution, Mr. Speaker, in order to reduce those greenhouse gas emissions. And

we've chosen this, Mr. Speaker, because it best balances affordability with emissions reduction. That's why we've chosen it. In fact Mr. Speaker -- The plan -- the proposal that the leader of the opposition has talked about would cost four times as much. Mr. Speaker

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Premier said this is mandated by the federal government. Let me say the federal government did not mandate Ontario to be sending 200 million to California by 2020. It did not mandate Ontario to be sending almost 2 billion by 2030 to subsidized businesses in California and Québec. This makes us less competitive. The auditor general has said this does not even help with reducing emissions in Ontario. And as the chamber says, this is about importing pollution to Ontario. So now we have the auditor general saying you're not going to reduce significantly emissions in Ontario and you've got the chamber saying you're going to import pollution. Can you not take a pause and look at this? Why are you going to continue to help businesses in California?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, so let's just look at what the Conservatives want to do. They want to go down a road that would be more expensive, Mr. Speaker, but even more worrisome, Mr. Speaker. It would be less effective. There are young people sitting in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker. There are young people who are interested in a sustainable future for the planet, Mr. Speaker. So it is critical, it is critical that every jurisdiction do its part, Mr. Speaker. We've chosen the most effective, the most cost effective, the most affordable process, Mr. Speaker. What the Conservatives are suggesting would cost businesses and individuals, families four times what the plan we are putting in place, Mr. Speaker. So it makes no sense. It would not be as effective and certainly would not be as affordable, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: The Premier makes assertions that are not based on reality. The reality is the chamber is not concerned about any other plan. The chamber's concerned about this Premier's cap and trade. Mr. Speaker, the Premier says this is about protecting the planet for children watching here today. The reality is her plan does not do that. This government, according to the auditor general, their plan will cause us to lose investment. The chamber has made that clear. We're going to be importing pollution under their plan. Can you imagine that? Importing pollution? We're not even reducing emissions here yet we're putting a huge new cost on business? Why does this Premier want to kill jobs in Ontario and actually import pollution? It doesn't make sense. It's a And makes us less competitive, Mr. Speaker .

>>Minister Glen Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member -- leader of the opposition is proposing to increase carbon pricing in Ontario from \$18 a tonne to \$72 a tonne.

[Interjections], Mr. Speaker, I'm just curious about something. If the leader of the opposition could just turn slightly to the left and talk to the member for Leeds- Grenville, who supports Kevin o'leary for leadership and Kevin o'leary said Patrick Brown, if he wants to bring carbon taxation to Ontario, even though he's a Conservative, all cam -- I'll campaign against him. I'll work very hard to make sure he stays out of power, Mr. Speaker. Even his Deputy leader doesn't agree with him.

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Sousa) Re: Hydro One Executive Salaries

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question's for the Premier. On April 29, 2015, I quote -- any decision of the magnitude will require a two-thirds majority of the Hydro One board of directors which means having 40% ownership protects us. Who said that? The current Premier of Ontario. October 20, 2015, I quote, the Premier said -- with 40% ownership of the board, that would require the people of Ontario always to have a say. Who said that? The Premier. October 28, 2015 I quote -- will there be an ability for the government to retain control over major decisions because of that vote? 40% ownership? Yes. That's the Premier again. All these were said by the Premier. So, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier very clear. The Premier has always maintained that, with this share, that the government will have control of Hydro One over big decisions. These are the Premier's words. Is that still the case today?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. So the Premier's saying we have control of Hydro One. She's on the record numerous times saying that. Yet when we asked about the Hydro One executive salaries, the government's response is we have no control. We have no say. This is a private company. You can't have it both ways. The Premier's on the record saying we'll retain control. She's pitched that to Ontarians under her fire sale of Hydro One. And now we have salaries that frankly are offensive. We have multimillion-dollar salaries. We've got a millionaires club of senior executives at Hydro One and the government saying they have nothing to do with it. They're speaking out of both sides of their mouth. They can't have it both ways. So my question is, given the fact that you've said you have control, yes or no, will you rein in these offensive executive salaries?

>> Minister Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite probably knows it the prospectus very clear as to what those salaries would be. We were very transparent and open as to what would occur going forward. We recognized we wanted the company to be more responsive to consumers ensuring they relate better to the customers and the rate base and they've been doing so, Mr. Speaker. The company has now improved dramatically since inception. They attracted some of the brightest and the smartest out there to enable us to attract greater value for this company, which ultimately benefits all Ontarians going forward, including, Mr. Speaker, our ability now to reduce rates by 25%. The salaries were fully disclosed last year, Mr. Speaker, before today. Thank You.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. I did not get an answer. The Premier's on the record -- and I quote again -- the people of Ontario will retain de facto control of Hydro One. The Premier promised Ontarians that we'd have control over Hydro One, and yet here we are, seeing offensive salaries. \$4.5 million as a salary is appropriate? Give me a break. It's not, Mr. Speaker. And yet this government is trying to hide from it. They promised us control. They're walking away from that. It's not too late to do the right thing. You still have majority of the shares. You still have control if you actually meant what you said. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is this. Yes or no -- will you rein in these offensive executive salaries that are completely out of context with the rest of the country, completely out of context what people make. It's too much. It's wrong. The Premier needs to clean this up.

>> Minister Glen Murray: Mr. Speaker, it's critical that this operation, this corporation do its utmost to provide greater value for the ratepayers and people of Ontario and that's what is occurring, Mr. Speaker, because a net value to the ratepayers and the shareholders, which as the member opposite has rightly noted, is the province of Ontario. We'll always be the majority shareholder. We'll always have the largest say. We do have the ability, Mr. Speaker, of gaining more value for this corporation to allow the operator to do its job effectively and in a competitive manner, Mr. Speaker. Now we have an opportunity to foster consolidations around the industry. There are 72 competitors in Ontario distributing hydro, Mr. Speaker. We need them all to do better. This corporation is doing just that. Thank you.

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne Re: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question's for the Premier. Does the Premier believe it's fair for Hydro One to Jack up delivery rates by 20% at the same time as hydro executives get a multimillion-dollar raise?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we are reducing people's hydro bills around this province by 25%, Mr. Speaker. There's already an 8% reduction in place. On top of that another 17%, Mr. Speaker. We recognized that people across the province need help with their electricity bills. We recognized that, with the 8% that was not enough. There needed to be more. Mr. Speaker, we also recognized that people outside of dense urban areas so in more remote and rural areas need more support, Mr. Speaker, so they will see not a 25% reduction, but in some instances a 40 or 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. That is going to happen this summer. Those are real impacts of the plan that

we've brought forward, Mr. Speaker, that will help people in their lives to make sure they can pay their bills and look after their families. That's the steps we are taking, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Yesterday the Premier and her Minister of energy defended Hydro One c.e.o.'s 500% salary increase saying it was because they introduced e-billing. I'm not sure if that was a joke or not, Speaker. Because let's be honest. The biggest news coming out of Hydro One is that they want to have an increase of delivery rates by 20%. That's the biggest news coming out of Hydro One. Will the Premier tell Ontario families whether she thinks Hydro One's C.E.O. Should be getting a 500% raise?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, I know that these are high salaries. I understand that. The focus of our initiative, Mr. Speaker, has been on reducing people's hydro bills, giving them a break, Mr. Speaker, because we recognize that the building that we have done, the investments that had to be made, Mr. Speaker, because the electric trusty system was in shambles, that there's a cost associated with those, Mr. Speaker, and so we've been removing costs from the electricity system. We recognize that wasn't enough, and so now, this summer, people will see a 25% reduction on their electricity bills. And, Mr. Speaker, outside of the urban areas in more remote and rural areas, a 40 to 50% reduction, Mr. Speaker. We understand that that's what people need. That's the plan that we've brought forward and that's what we're implementing, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: There is no plan but it sounds like a bouncing ball. First it was 17. Then 25. Now it's 40 or 50. I don't think a single Ontarian believes this government.

[Applause] Hydro One has applied to Jack up delivery rates by 20% at the same time that hydro executives get multimillion-dollar raises. And the Premier and her Minister of energy don't seem to have a problem with this at all. When will the Premier stop advocating for the 1% and start advocating for the 99%?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the 99% is exactly who are going to see a 25% reduction. And if you add 17% and 8%, Mr. Speaker, you get 25%. If you look at distribution charges that are going to be brought down in the remote and rural areas, you get that 25% up to 40 or 50%, Mr. Speaker. That's how those numbers have been calculated because those are the reductions that people are going to see on their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that we recognize that the costs of the investments that we have made in an electricity system that was in shambles, Mr. Speaker, that was not reliable. That was not clean, that there was a cost associated with that. That's why people will see those reductions come summer.

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Ballard) Re: Rental Costs

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Question for the Premier. \$1650 is already a ridiculous amount of money to have to pay to rent a one-bedroom apartment that is less than 500 square feet and has no balcony. But that is the reality of graham Farquhar. As if \$1650 a month wasn't high enough, graham got a shock recently when he found out that his landlord is planning to double that rent on July 1st of this year. Yesterday the Premier said this was and I quote really unacceptable. But refused to say when she's actually going to do something about it. Can the Premier tell us when her expressions of sympathy will be backed up by something a little more tangible, like closing the 1991 rent control loophole, which we could actually do today?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know I'm well aware that the -- certainly the member for Toronto- Danforth understands how important this is, because when he raised it, our Minister of housing was able to respond to it, we made it clear. We get this, Mr. Speaker. Something has to be done. We are going to be bringing forward not just a plan on that particular issue, Mr. Speaker, but on housing affordability, on rental affordability because there are a number of changes that need to be made, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to bring those forward in context. So there is no argument between me and the leader of the third party something needs to be done. We recognize that. We're going to be bringing forward proposals very soon, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, time is ticking. Land lords are looking their lips and tenants are getting really nervous about the future. Generation squeeze issued a report today saying that the quality of life for young people living in the G.T.A. Is slipping, Speaker. The report singles out the high cost of the rental housing as one of the causes, saying that young people are working full time but, quote, watching their money down to the penny. Is the Premier planning to tell a whole generation of young people that they're going to continue to see their quality of life decline because she is afraid to take action quickly to quell the 1991 loophole immediately?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Speaker, as I said in my first answer, we tourly are not having an argument about this. I actually agree that there are things that need to be done. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this issue of fairness for tenants, Mr. Speaker, in the context of fairness for landlords, but when I came into office in 2003, as the member for don valley west, Mr. Speaker, I actually advocated within our caucus to change the landlord tenant act millimetre. It got changed to the residential ten nancys act. We made a lot of changes that would help people put in place supports for tenants, Mr. Speaker. But there's more that needs to be done. There is no argument between me and the leader of the third party. There's no argument between me and the member for Toronto- Danforth. There is more that needs to be done. We are bringing forward. Not just one item, Mr. Speaker, but we are bringing forward a package every proposals. That will deal with housing affordability.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, if I was the Premier I would be awfully embarrassed by admitting she's been advocating for this since 2003 and nothing has Hammed on this file.

[Applause] And people are getting evicted from their place that is they live. The Premier, if she wanted to help, Speaker, if she actually wanted to take some action to do something about this major issue that's facing young people and thousands of tenants, she could. She could do it right now, Speaker. Will the Premier bring in the NDP Bill? Will she bring it forward for a vote today, close that 1991 loophole immediately and protect the renters of this province?

>> Minister Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to -- for that question. You know, Speaker, it goes without saying that it's unacceptable that so many Ontarians are faced with housing costs that are rising so dramatically. It goes without saying when we talk about that. You know, as Minister of housing, I want to help Ontarians, every Ontarian reach home ownership. For Ontarians, a House is more than a place to sleep. It's a source of pride. You know, let's just talk about some of the things we've done. We've already said that rent control, we're open to expanding that. We've said time and again sooner rather than later. So perhaps the third party can't take yes for an answer. We're working with our secondary -- our municipalities to promote secondary suites because supply is important. We'll have more in the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Smith to Minister Sandals (Thibeault) Re: Sunshine List and Hydro Executive Salaries

>> MPP Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the president of the treasury board. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the president at O.P.G., who was the top earner on the province's payroll in 2016, actually made more than \$700,000 more than the sunshine list disclosed on Friday. The difference -- the difference, Speaker, was a bonus that showed up on o.p.g.'s book but was suspiciously left off the government's books. Speaker, how many more six-figure bonuses has the president of the Ontario treasury board hidden from the people of Ontario?

>> MPP Liz Sandals: Yes. Thank you very much. And of course what is reported on the sunshine list, as I've said several times in here, is not the annual salary. It is as your legislation requires. It is what is reported in bosh 14 of the t-4. It is whatever Canada revenue says should go in box 14 of the t-4. That is what is reported. Now it is also true that there are things that aren't reported. For example not pension. So it is not -- Constitutions are not reported is perfectly consistent with the law, as you laid it out, because that isn't in the t-4 salary box. But what is also true is our new executive compensation legislation says no bonuses.

>> MPP Smith: Thanks, Speaker. We've watched this government hand out cycles-figure performance bonuses for projects that were overbudget and late or built upside down. You know, they operate like the Oprah Winfrey show over there. Look under your seat. There's probably a bonus there waiting for you. Here we have a project that isn't even done yet, and the government's hitting taxpayers up for hundreds of thousands of dollars again. So, Speaker, how many more big bonuses did the president of the treasury board hand out this year for projects that were over budget, late or incomplete?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Speaker, when it comes to O.P.G. And the work that's happening right now with our nuclear refurbishment, Mr. Speaker, the O.P.G. President has reported to us that they're actually underbudget, Mr. Speaker, and on time. Something that we expect from our executives, Mr. Speaker. So that's great news for Ontario ratepayers. Of course when it comes to O.P.G., Mr. Speaker, as the president of the treasury board outlined, the process is being followed by us as laid out by our framework, Mr. Speaker. O.P.G. Sought appropriate comparators and set compensation at a level that is restrained but is competitive for the industry, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Lieat's salary was reported accurately in the sunshine list just like each every other person's salary appears on their t-4, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Tabuns to Premier Wynne (Ballard) Re: Rental Costs

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Premier. Today I read about Victoria manini, a young woman who did everything right but still can't seem to get ahead here in Toronto. Victoria works as a designer acoveted job in her field, but she couldn't afford her rent on just that salary so she also works as a bartender. Speaker, she works 60 hours a week and says she doesn't know when she's going to be able to stop living like this. The Premier could help her right now. Will she commit to the supporting my bill to close the 1991 rent control loophole and help Victoria and people like her?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Once again, Mr. Speaker. I said earlier that I know that the member for Toronto- Danforth understands. I know he listens to tenants's advocacy groups. He talks to individuals as I do in my own riding, Mr. Speaker. I know that some of the people, like abbas coalia, like pat Moore, who has been working with me, Mr. Speaker, . He knows those people. He knows the concerns of tenants around the province. When he brought his bill forward, Mr. Speaker, on that very day, the Minister of housing made it clear that this is something that we are concerned about and that we are moving forward. Mr. Speaker, we're going to be bringing forward a proposal for a number of changes Mr. Speaker -- There's no argument. Something that needs to be done and something, Mr. Speaker, that -- On top of change this is government has already made. We look forward to moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

>>MPP Tabuns: Speaker, concern and commitment are two very different things. University of Toronto housing advocates say that young people like Victoria may have the mistaken impression that it's their fault their economic stars have not aligned. There might be a sense that they've done something wrong, reads the generation squeeze report. Will the Premier commit today -- not just express concern -- commit to taking the first step in fixing the mess that is causing so many young Ontarians to lose hope for their future? Will she commit to ending this rent control loophole now.

>> Minister Chris Ballard: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, you know, housing affordability is on the list of virtually all of us. I can't walk down the street without bumping into a neighbour who's not -- who not only talks about the price of housing on our street but the struggle their children face in renting an accommodation or buying their own place. You know, it's -- what I will commit to today, Speaker, as I said last week to the member opposite. That's why we're already developing a plan to address unfair rises in rental costs by deliver ago substantive rent control reform on -- substantive rental form in Ontario as part of an ongoing review of the residential tenancy act. Mr. Speaker, we've been working on this since June of last year. We'll have a whole suite soon.

MPP Baker to Minister Hunter (Coteau) Re: Special Needs Education Services

>> MPP Yvan Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of education. Speaker, soon after I was elected I learned that the tdsb was planning to sell silver creek public school which would displace hundreds of people with special needs at Etobicoke and silver creek school in my riding of Etobicoke centre. It was unacceptable to me we would endanger services for our most vulnerable children. I worked alongside members of our community, including the friend of silver creek, Etobicoke children's centre, silver creek preschool and multiple Minister s and staff here in our government to save these essential services. Yesterday, Minister, you made an announcement in my riding regarding what our government is going to do about these issues. Speaker, through you to the Minister. Minister, can you tell us more about yesterday's announcement?

>> MPP Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, phenomenal Colleagues like the member from Etobicoke Centre and member from Kingston and the Islands are exactly what we need in this legislature. I was at the Etobicoke children's centre to announce the province intends to acquire two facilities to preserve the full range of support services that are available to local families. This proposed investment would preserve the support for children's mental health and autism, licensed child care, including specialized care for children with a range of special special needs. And the early years child and family support program currently offered at Mcnicoll public school in north York and silver creek in Etobicoke. Local families can now rest assured that the programs and services they rely on continue to be there for them and their children, and this development was made possible because of collaboration. Our government has. Listened to the communities and the MPP S that represent them. Our government is committed to making it easier to create and maintain communities across Ontario.

>> Thank you, Minister. It was a true honour to participate in yesterday's announcement. I have to tell you that moments like yesterday are why I ran for MPP To make a difference for people in our community and we did that yesterday. Yesterday, Speaker, people had tears in their eyes during that moment. Through our Collective work to protect and preserve these services at silver creek public school I have spoken to countless families. I've developed a new appreciation for the importance of these services for children's families in our communities across Ontario and I'm proud that we recognize the value of both preserving silver creek public school and Mcnicoll public school as vibrant and essential community hubs to support community as much as in our communities. With yesterday's announcement that the province intends to acquire silver creek, families in Etobicoke centre. Seek comfort in knowing we are working to maintain services with special education needs. Minister, can you tell us more about the important services – continue to offer.

>> Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for the question. You know, these types of initiatives make me proud to be part of this government here in Ontario. Silver creek and Mcnicoll school are more than just schools. They're spaces where families come together to access important services. Silver creek public school offers licensed child care and specialized care for children with special needs. Both silver creek and Mick Nichol offer a range every child and youth mental health services and autism programs and they're able to do this, Mr. Speaker, through two amazing programs, organizations, adventure place and the Etobicoke children's centre. These types of support are so important to our communities. As my role as Minister of children and youth services I've spent a lot of time with parents across the province who know these types of programs are so important to help build families and support children here in Ontario.

MPP Scott to Minister Naqvi Re: Sexual Assault Training for Judges

>> MPP Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question's to the Attorney General. Two weeks ago in question period, I called on this government to require mandatory sexual assault training for judicial appointees. At that time the Attorney General rejected the idea completely claiming that to

do so would undermine judicial Independence. So it was curious that yesterday we saw a government member announcing her intention to introduce the private member's bill that does what the Premier and Attorney General, as recently as last week, said they would not support. During her announcement, the member for Davenport claimed that she had the support of her caucus in introducing this bill. All of this makes me wonder if the Attorney General even knows what caucus Colleagues think about this issue. So my question to the Attorney General is have they come around to support mandatory sexual assault law training for Ontario judicial appointees? Or are they just playing political games to avoid taking responsibility?

>>Minister Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I thank the member for asking the question. I thank -- I appreciate the press conference the member from Davenport did yesterday. Speaker, I think all members of this House I hope recognize that when we're dealing with issues around sexual assault, sexual violence harassment, it's not something that is partisan in nature, Speaker. That is not something that we should be debating in terms of political terms, Speaker. What we should be doing is exactly what our Premier has done, is show leadership in making sure we have effective strategies and plans in place to combat sexual violence and harass many. Speaker, I'm really proud of the Premier to bringing -- by bringing forward "It's never ok" strategy that will ensure. That we in a very meaningful way put an end to sexual violence and harassment in our province. And there is an opportunity.

>> MPP Scott: Well, Mr. Speaker, back to the Attorney General. You are making it partisan. The mixed signals coming from this government -- Clear issue doing what is right to protect sexual assault survivors. What you're doing is appalling. I've received many expressions of public support for mandatory sexual assault training for provincial judges which confirms it is a pressing issue for Ontarians. Hiding behind judicial Independence shows a lack of will to act on the part of the government. If the Wynne government was truly serious about this issue, they would introduce this as a government legislation, not a private member's bill! It always seems like the only way to get this government to act, whether it's on sexual assault training for judges or human sex trafficking, is to shame them into it! So my question to the Attorney General is. When will he stop the political games and tackle the issue of sexual assault training?

>> Minister Naqvi: Speaker, I want to tell the member opposite and all members of this House that I, as a member of provincial parliament, I as the Attorney General of this province, I as a son and a husband, take -- and as a father of a young daughter, take the issue of sexual assault and harassment very, very seriously. And to make accusations like this, Speaker, is beneath any member of this House. Speaker, what I also take very seriously is a very -- What I also take very seriously as the Attorney General is the fundamental tenet of our democracy and that is the Independence of judiciary. We all know, Speaker, in our system of democracy. We do not get to tell the judiciary as to what they should or not do. That is totally within their scope. I look forward to reviewing the member --

MPP Fife to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Executive Salaries

>>MPP Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. The C.E.O. Of O.P.G. Earned more than 2 million in total compensation last year. Not the 1.2 million that was stated in the sunshine list. The government's gradual thawing of public sector executive pay allowed the C.E.O. To walk away with over 2 million in salaries, bonuses, pension money and almost \$40,000 in other pay. \$40,000 a year is what most young people in this province would be thrilled to earn. They face, and I quote, stagnant wages. How can this Premier justify these executives Sal -- executive salaries for the struggling young people of this province?

>> MPP Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased once again to rise and speak to the great work that O.P.G. Is doing in our province making sure that we have affordable power, Mr. Speaker, that's also clean. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that on paper those salaries do look very large, Mr. Speaker. But let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, that these are the individuals who are nuclear technical experts, Mr. Speaker. The comparators that are used make sure that they're not the highest paid in

this sector, Mr. Speaker, but they're also not the lowest paid in this sector. We also want to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that our nuclear facilities are run by the best -- Mr. Speaker, that our nuclear facilities are run by the best people to ensure the safety and health for everyone in the province, Mr. Speaker, and that's what the executive is doing at O.P.G..

>> MPP Fife: Again to the Premier. These high salaries, bonuses and pension perks are indefensible. They're not just high on paper. Here' high in the real world which is the province of Ontario, to the Minister of energy. Does the Premier understand that a whole generation in this province are struggling with part-time, contract and unstable work? They're not getting ahead. They are barely treading water. A new report out today shows that Ontario has the second-worst economy for young people in the country. In fact and I quote -- no province reported a decline in full-time earnings since 2003, except Ontario. This means young Ontarians are working for less money than their parents at a time of skyrocketing rents and hydro costs. When is this government actually going to do something and make more -- life more affordable for the people of this province?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I do acknowledge that these salaries are high, Mr. Speaker, but these are our nuclear technical experts that are keeping our facilities operating, Mr. Speaker, at high safety standards making sure that all health and safety standards are being met and making sure that we have powers, Mr. Speaker, right across this province. But when it comes to making sure that people have affordable lifestyles, Mr. Speaker, that's what we've done with our fair hydro plan. Bringing forward a plan with a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker, we worked with the experts at O.P.G. To ensure we can find ways to bring down our rates, Mr. Speaker. A 25% reduction for all families, small businesses and farms right across the province, Mr. Speaker, is extremely -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is something that we're very proud to bring forward, Mr. Speaker, which is our fair hydro plan helping families and businesses right across the province.

MPP Hoggarth to Minister Zimmer Re: First Nations Community Safety

>>MPP Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of indigenous relations and reconciliation. I know that our government is dedicated to working with first nations as partners in order to achieve better social and economic outcomes. Kashechewan community with 2,300 residents has face add s Eries of flooding for years. Flooding has often caused the community to declare a state of emergency, leaving its residents vulnerable. This is an issue that has been going on for a while and one that requires immediate attention. Account Minister please elaborate on what our government is doing to help the kashechewan first nation community?

>>Minister David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, the safety and well-being of indigenous communities in Ontario, especially first nations, is a top priority for this government. We take that matter very seriously. For too long the people of kashechewan have had to endure yearly evacuations and to endure all the difficult and social and physical problems that those evacuations entails. With my federal Colleague Minister Bennett, I went to kashechewan on this past Friday, where we signed a tripartite agreement between kashechewan first nation, the federal government and Ontario. I met with many members of his community. I was particularly touched by my meetings with the children of the community who are so looking forward to having this difficult issue resolved along with their parents and grandparents. Canada, Ontario and kashechewan first nation are committed to working together to fix this problem of flooding.

>>MPP Hoggarth: Thank you. Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad to hear that our government is committed to working with first nations communities such as kashechewan to address the issues that they face. Everyone should live in a safe, sustainable environment and should not be subject to hardships that are out of their control. Although there is much work left to do, I'm encouraged to know that this government is taking the necessary steps to solve this issue. Agreements such as this will help strengthen our partnership with the indigenous communities. Mr. Speaker, account Minister please elaborate in what LED to the signing of this important agreement?

>> Minister Zimmer: Speaker, this is what LED to the signing of this tripartite agreement. Over the past years, kashechewan has been subjected to states of emergency and evacuations due to flooding and other issues time and time and time again. It has serious safety, social and economic impacts on the community. Chief Friday from kashechewan first nation wrote to Premier Wynne and asked and asked that Ontario join with him and the federal government at a table to tackle this issue. We answered chief Friday's call. We are at the table with the first nation and the federal government. We understand the immediate concerns and that immediate action has to be taken. Speaker, that's why I went to kashechewan on Friday and signed that agreement with chief Friday and Minister Bennett and the kashechewan first nation.

MPP Fedeli to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

>> MPP Vic Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. My question's for the Minister of energy. On the weekend, I spoke with the executives of legion branch 23 in North Bay. Their hydro bill had climbed from 38,000 to over \$48,000. And that's despite converting to L.E.D.S, changing the ballasts, and doing everything else they were advised to do. Preston quirk, bill Wilkins and Jim Thomson told me that, quote -- hydro has broken our back. They told me they were, quote, forced into bankruptcy because of their hydro bills. Eventually the legion was forced to sell their building. They're a prime example of how this government's failed energy policies are hurting communities across Ontario and creating hydro horror stories. I ask the Minister, will the government put a stop to their costly vanity ads and address the real hydro crisis they created in Ontario?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for the question and highlighting some of the organizations in this province that are having a difficult time, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we acted with the Ontario fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, and organizations like legions and many other institution that is we all have in our ridings will see this 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we brought forward this plan, Mr. Speaker, is to actually help those organizations. And I'm hoping that the member actually talked about what they would do as a party if they ever, Mr. Speaker, had the opportunity to bring forward a plan. But, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan. They have no idea on the systems. All they did, Mr. Speaker, was allow the system to deteriorate for decades, Mr. Speaker. Under our government we've rebuilt the system to make sure that we have power in northern Ontario, that we have now, Mr. Speaker, an affordable plan. That will help legions right across this province.

>> MPP Fedeli: Back to the Minister. He obviously missed the point that the ledge on was forced to sell their building. They're gone. Preston and Billy and Jim told me, quote -- this hurts us. We had to lay off staff and it's hydro that did it, quote. They can no longer support their pipe fans, their track and field grants that help so many area men and women to make it to the olympics. They no longer have a hall to give out to charity events. They can no longer properly take care of their vets. And they told me that's what hurts them the most. They want to quote lay the blame where it lies and that is with the hydro bill. Proud ownership of legion 23 is nothing but a distant memory today, Speaker. Our party has been sharing these tragic hydro stories. Mostly the heckling. How many more legions, Rinks and restaurants need to close before this Minister takes any action? Thank you

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Long before my arrival in this ministry, Mr. Speaker, this government has taken action on building a system to ensure that we have a clean system and a reliable system, Mr. Speaker, something that they didn't do when they were in power, Mr. Speaker. They actually froze rates to make sure that there was no investment in the system. We invested \$50 billion, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we have a clean system, a green system and a reliable system, Mr. Speaker. The fair hydro plan coming forward will now help legions. It will help Curling clubs. It will help 500,000 small businesses and families, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing making sure our fair hydro plan will actually benefit everyone in this province. They don't have a plan, Mr. Speaker. They don't even have time to consider one, Mr. Speaker. The only thing that that leader can do is pen a letter about saving the NHL and the olympics, Mr Speaker.

MPP Horwath to Minister Hoskins Re: Long-Term Care Standards

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question's for the Premier. The ministry of health has stopped all new admissions to cedarwood lodge atemporary long-term care home in Sault Ste. Marie. The ministry says there is, quote, serious risk of harm to the health or well-being of residents. This is deeply troubling news for families whose loved ones live at cedarwood and it adds to the stress and worry felt by the 553 people who are waiting today for long-term care in the Sault. Will the Premier tell the people of Sault Ste. Marie what are the serious risks that have been found at cedarwood lodge, and since the Premier has refused to support the NDP's call for minimum standards of care, how is she ensuring residents are going to be kept safe?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question with regards to cedarwood. And, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that all long-term care residents in this province deserve to live in their homes in these residences safe and secure and in a compassionate environment. And so that's why the safety and the quality of care is so important to this government. We've implemented an inspection regime which allows us to provide those assurances and understand in the minority of cases when and if a home isn't provided the standard of care that either they're required to under the act or that Ontarians should expect to receive in these homes. So it is true that a cease of admissions was issued. The Minister of health did this in the case of cedarwood and I'm happy to explain reasons behind that in the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Families have been concerned about their aging loved ones in cedarwood lodge for a long time. In less than two years this for-profit facility has received at least 20 orders to comply and -- get this -- 84 written notices of violations of the law. New admissions were suspended back in 2015, Speaker, and yet it's happening again. People in the Sault and across Ontario want real action to improve the quality of long-term care for all of our seniors. But this Premier is refusing to properly staff long-term care homes and refusing to support the NDP's call for a minimum standard of care. Why is this Premier failing to ensure that every senior in Ontario lives with the dignity, the comfort and the safety that they deserve?

>> Minister Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, when the ministry conducted a quality inspection late last year, they found a number of areas of noncompliance. They included not following residence plans of care, not identifying triggers to responsive behaviours following a resident altercation that resulted in physical injury to another resident. Not having a program in place for skin and wound care as well as no falls prevention program. Not reporting abuse to the director immediately, and not ensuring that there was sufficient collaboration between staff and others in the assessment of resident care and their care plans. There were instances where changes were made without the approval of the attending physician, so these are serious matters. I want to reassure. The residents of this long-term care, as well as their families, that their safety is assured. We are addressing these issues and monitoring the situation re closely.

MPP Qaadri to Minister Lalonde Re: Francophone Affairs

>> MPP Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister delegated to francophone affairs. Mr. Speaker, as you know, we celebrated the international day for francophonie last month, and I know that our government, and more particularly the Minister for francophone affairs -- in many ways. In fact it was the first international day for francophonie that Ontario celebrates as an observation member for the international francophonie organization. I think that's an important moment for francophones in our province. There are more opportunities than ever before. Can the Minister explain how our government works to promote Ontarian francophonie beyond our borders?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for his question. And I want to say that it is a great -- francophonie in Ontario is going very well and also

beyond our borders. Last week I had the opportunity to take part in our first session for our standing committee on francophonie affairs as an observation member. Another great opportunity to talk about our -- around 600,000 francophone Ontarians, our viable institution -- valuable institutions and francophone diplomats everywhere in the world. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that the international community can learn a lot about francophonie in Ontario and people are very impressed by our vitality and our institutions. So this is a great opportunity to learn more about what francophonie can offer and our future role in this great international organization.

>>MPP Qaadri: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for her answer, and I am very proud that -- about all the progress that has been established for francophones. Francophones are part of Ontario's history and part of Fran -- I'm part of francophile community and I have many friends in my riding who take part. Mr. Speaker, are there other initiatives that would support francophonie so that the Minister can promote francophonie for generations to come?

>>Minister Lalonde: Thank you. Last Friday my Colleague eldy and myself we took part in a federal provincial territorial forum on francophonie immigration and, Mr. Speaker, this was a historical meeting. For the first time in 50 years the Minister s of immigration and francophonie met in order to talk about strategic issues to strengthen immigration for francophones. We know that here in Ontario this immigration will be essential for our francophone communities. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that Ontario's voice was heard in moncton, and I would like to thank my Colleague Laura Albanese for her dedication because we are working very hard to reach a target of 5% of immigration for francophones in Ontario. So we will continue to support our francophone communities, whether it's through local initiatives or global initiatives so that they can thrive and prosper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Jones to Minister Hoskins Re: Hospital Wait Times

>> MPP Jones: My question is to the Minister of health. I've been working with a constituent from Dufferin-caledon who is languishing on one of your wait lists. Mr. Alcorn's surgeon has told him that he requires immediate back surgery, but there is such a long waiting list, it will be one year until his next consultation and at least two years until his surgery. Mr. Alcorn wants to know why is he being forced to wait three years for his needed back surgery?

>> Minister Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course not knowing the specifics of this gentleman's situation, I can't comment specifically. But, Mr. Speaker, we are working hard in making investments, targeted investments to reduce wait times. I had referenced I believe yesterday that Ontario, when it comes to the time from family doctor to specialist and specialist to the procedure if one is necessary that we have the shortest or among the shortest wait times in the entire country. But there's more work to be done. And one of the challenging areas is with orthopaedics and particularly with back surgery, Mr. Speaker. We have some great examples around the province where we have managed to make improvements both to the wait times but also to enable people -- People who perhaps don't need that surgical consult and that surgery to have other opportunities to get the support. But it is a challenging situation. I'd be happy to talk to the member more in detail.

>> MPP Jones Offer, Minister. The targeted wait times are clearly not working for Mr. Alcorn. He needs help now. He is not a candidate for courtsewn injections and his surgeons have told him there is no other relief that is appropriate or would help. Mr. Alcorn's surgeon has told him he would be willing to do more back surgery but he can't because the operating room has been limited due to the Minister 's funding model. When will this government stop blaming doctors and address these unacceptable wait times?

>> Minister Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned I'm happy to talk to the member opposite about this specific case. Difficult not knowing the particulars. But we have invested almost \$2 billion for more than 3 million additional procedures since we came into office. And, Mr. Speaker, much of that is specific to surgical procedures as well as to those who are experiencing back problems that require surgical outcome. But we have as I mentioned in Toronto and Hamilton and Thunder Bay, we

have is program called Isaac which addresses specifically people with lower back pain and through a centralized process and through various supportive -- different supportive measures are able to provide them with the support that they need and, if necessary, the surgery that they require. In greatly expedited ways. We're look at expanding that further. Again I make the offer to discuss it further.

MPP Hatfield to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

>>MPP Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. My question this morning is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. I have a sad and an unbelievable story for you. My constituent, Larry Brunner, is on Ontario works. He gets the max, \$706 a month. His rent is \$406. He has to pay back \$35.30 as part of an overpayment. So that leaves him with \$264.70 a month to live on. But his hydro bill has gone up to \$273.40. So he's \$8.70 in the hole before he even thinks about how he's going to get anything to eat or pay any other bills. Speaker, does this government still believe. The flawed energy policies are going to make life easier for everyone in Ontario?

>>Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward that question, and I would like to maybe talk with the MPP Afterwards to see if there's anything we can do to try and help this individual, Mr. Speaker, because I don't know all of the circumstances that relate to that. But there are programs that are in place, Mr. Speaker, to actually help individuals like that, Mr. Speaker. Because that's why we brought forward the Ontario electricity support programs, Mr. Speaker, to S to help individuals like that. And we are working with the ministry of community and social services, Mr. Speaker, to actually ensure that all O.W. Clients, Mr. Speaker, actually get that -- And we're actually working with the C.R.A. To ensure there is no requirement for a web signature because we do want to see those rebates go to those individuals as quickly as they can because it is in place, Mr. Speaker, to help individuals just like what the member opposite was talking about.

>>MPP Hatfield: Speaker, the rising cost of hydro is fast outpacing any increases people may get on Ontario works or the odsp. Even with a 17% cut to hydro bills that's coming sometime next summer, it would leave Larry \$37.78 to live on for the month. That's \$1.26 a day. \$1.26 a day to live on after your 17% cut that you say is coming sometime next summer. Speaker, what's it going to take to get this government to take better care of people like Larry Brunner, people who need their help the most?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I thank the member for the question and highlighting these issues, and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we acted with the fair hydro plan. The fair hydro plan is going to be that 25% reduction by this summer, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make sure that individuals who are on O.W. And are most vulnerable actually will see that oesp program, the Ontario electricity support program that I talked about in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker, we've increased that by 50%, Mr. Speaker. And then on top of that, we're actually allowing more individuals to qualify for this program to ensure that they can get these savings back into their pockets, Mr. Speaker. We have to, as I said before, Mr. Speaker, invest in our system, and we recognize that that costs money. And that's why we're now making sure that the fair hydro plan will bring forward a 25% reduction for everybody across the province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.